

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action dated March 9, 2007. In the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 8-23 are pending in the Application. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, and 8-23 were rejected. Claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 14 and 23 were amended, and claim 22 was canceled. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification and the Figures. No new matter was added. Reconsideration and allowance are requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, and 10-23 are rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison et al. (5,972,030) in view of Parker (6,315,488). Claims 9 is rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison et al. (5,972,030) in view of Parker (6,315,488) as applied to claim 1 and further in view of Carstens (4,863,201). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

Claim 1 has been amended to state that the holder body comprises a cavity, and the handle coupling is slidably engageable with the holder body and has an opening that is alignable with the cavity such that the tip of the handle can be inserted through the opening and into a selected position within the cavity. Claim 1 also includes the handle coupling being slidable relative to the holder body between a locked position, where a surface that defines the opening engages the tip, and an unlocked position, wherein the surface defining the opening does not engage the tip of the handle, such that the tip of the handle is removable from the holder body.

The Office Action states that Garrison discloses an apparatus including a ring fixture body (70 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments), ... the ring fixture body having a first opening (106 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments), and a tip coupling (80 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments), wherein the tip coupling includes a second opening (86 and all analogous counterparts in other embodiments).

Garrison does not disclose an opening on the handle coupling that is alignable with the cavity of the holder body such that the tip of a handle can be inserted through the opening and into a selected position within the cavity. Contrary to what the Office Action states about opening 106 and opening 86 in Garrison, Garrison states that:

Holder 102, 103 is in some respects similar to holder 70 of FIGS. 5A-C, with the

exception that, in place of handle coupling 80 of holder 70, holder 102, 103 has a hole 106, as in FIG. 12A, or a post 108, as in FIG. 12B, adapted for attachment to a conventional handle for use in open heart surgery. See col. 17, lines 15-20.

Thus, it is clear that the combination of opening 106 with opening 86, as set forth in the Office Action, is incorrect. Garrison does not disclose a handle coupling slidably engageable with the holder body, and does not disclose a cavity in the holder that is alignable with handle coupling opening, such that the tip of the handle can be inserted through the opening and into a selected position within the cavity. Garrison also does not disclose the handle coupling being slideable relative to the holder body between a locked position and an unlocked position. Thus, Garrison, does not disclose all of the claim limitations.

Parker relates to a snap-in handle assembly for a yard tool. Applicants contend that this reference is non-analogous art. The claimed apparatus is for the highly technical and specialized medical device field. One skilled in the medical field would not look to the yard tools to develop this apparatus. In any case, Parker does not supply the deficiency in Garrison since what is alleged as the handle coupling in Parker does not include an opening that is alignable with a cavity in the holder. In addition, the alleged handle coupling in Parker flexes, and does not slidably engage the holder body.

Thus, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been met since all of the claim limitations are not disclosed. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, and 10-23 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison in view of Parker is requested.

Carstens relates to a coupling assembly, and does not supply the deficiencies of Garrison and Parker. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 9 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Garrison et al in view of Parker and further in view of Carstens is requested.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this

communication, please contact Applicant's attorney of record, Hallie A. Finucane at 612-330-0587.

The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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